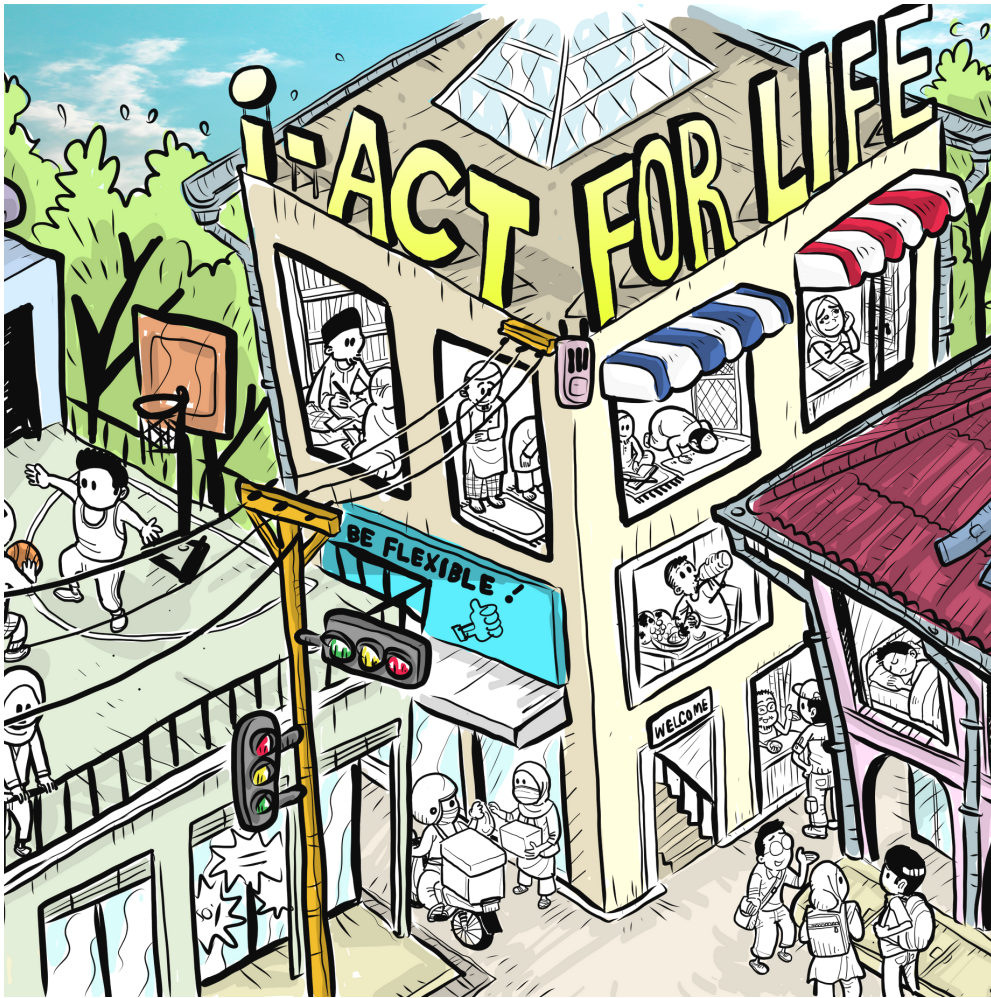


i-ACT For Life

**A prevention module featuring integrated
elements of Islamic Spirituality and
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)**



**Jamilah Hanum Abdul Khaiyom,
Amani Fadzlina Abdul Aziz,
Ahmad Nabil Md Rosli, Che Amnah Bahari,
Nur Sakinah Thomas Abdullah**

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الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
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يُؤَيِّدُ بَرَكَاتُهَا أَنْتَ إِذَا رَغَبْتَ فِي مِلَّةِهَا
Garden of Knowledge and Virtue



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The publication contains the holy verses of the Quran. Readers are requested to handle this publication in the best possible way so that the purity of the Quranic verses contained is preserved.

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ACCOLADES

“i-ACT for Life™ combines all of the possible approaches to transforming an unmotivated young adult’s attitude into one of reliability and stability. . . . A well-rounded module that is appropriate for young people who are still making the move to adulthood. The module contains a good balance of psychology and spirituality, allowing you to incorporate what you’ve learned into your daily life as a Muslim.”

***Siti Mazarina Mohd Ramli, Master Student of Mechanical Engineering,
Department of Mechanical Engineering, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia***

“The *i-ACT for Life™* 5-step prevention module is a simple and comprehensive tool that has helped me in navigating my transition into adulthood by guiding me on how to be introspective of my own psychological patterns and gently nudge them in the right direction through spiritually-infused weekly exercises.”

***Wan Ahmad Mujaddid Wan Ahmad Tajuddin, Bachelor Student of Psychology,
Department of Psychology, International Islamic University Malaysia***

“I was introduced to [*i-ACT for Life™*] during a particularly stressful time of my study, and I’m glad for that! The techniques discussed in this module have greatly helped me, especially the technique of unhooking. I often find myself procrastinating to avoid facing difficult tasks – so by learning unhooking I learnt that I was often paralyzed by my thoughts, and that by treating these thoughts as just that – fleeting thoughts, not facts – I was able to cope with my work better.”

***Farah Hannan Abd Nasir, PhD Student of Physics,
Department of Physics, University of Malaya***

“[*i-ACT for Life™*] guides me to let go of things that weigh me down. . . . The integration with the Islamic perspective has placed my life in Him as well, and made my life more meaningful. . . . Thus, this book helps readers to let go and breathe again.”

***Nur Syahirunisa Binti Hassan, Master Student of Clinical and Counselling Psychology,
Department of Psychology, International Islamic University Malaysia***

“I believe that this self-help module can help many people out there as it personally helped me to cope with the challenges that I have faced. It helped me to be more flexible as it taught me to be more open to the challenges that I might face. One of the reasons that I personally liked this module was due to the Islamic spiritual elements. . . . Especially when you are struggling with spiritual needs. I am sure that this module will help many people because it is easy to follow, and it is very practical.”

***Mohammad Azam Aidil Mohamad Fozei, Bachelor Student of Psychology,
Department of Psychology, International Islamic University Malaysia***

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I said: what about my eyes?

He said: Keep them on the road.

I said: What about my passion?

He said: Keep it burning.

I said: What about my heart?

He said: Tell me what you hold inside it?

I said: Pain and sorrow.

He said: Stay with it. The wound is the place where the Light enters you.

— Rumi

PREFACE

“How can we help our young adults to thrive during COVID-19?”

It all started with this question. As academics and mental health professionals, we observed that university students struggle with multiple responsibilities, expectations, and the need to adapt fast during the early COVID-19. Many try to get help. Unfortunately, resources such as psychological services were scarce. For many months, one-on-one, face-to-face psychological services were halted during the early pandemic.

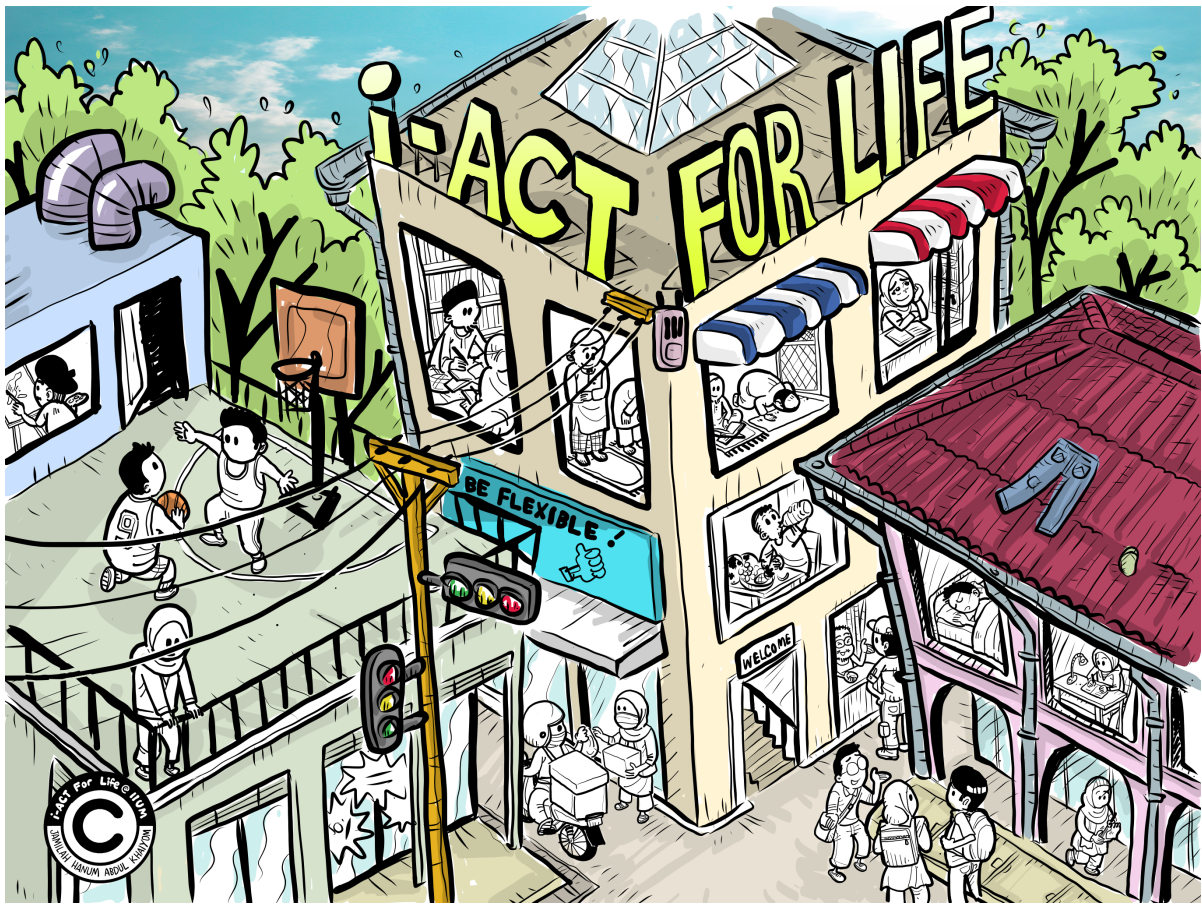
Understandably, everybody was adjusting and trying to adapt. It does not exclude mental health professionals. In our region, not many were trained to conduct psychological services online. Ethical issues such as confidentiality and threats to the security and integrity of information were some of the challenges faced by mental health professionals. This slowed the transition process to e-psycho-social services.

Nevertheless, we learn, and we learn fast. We embody resilience. We continue reaching out to our young adults. Guided by the stepped care model, we believe the first step is to empower young adults to self-help using the tools in their hands – digitalized technology. Self-Help Plus (SH+) WHO’s 5-session stress management course, with pre-recorded audio and an illustrated guide (Doing What Matters in Times of Stress), is the perfect module to be adapted and utilized. Moreover, many people turn to religion and spirituality in times of crisis; hence, the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental disorders must be integrated with spiritual elements.

Knowing that people are overwhelmed with information during the pandemic leads us to believe that the services we want to provide must be simplified following a micro-content framework. It must also not take much of our young adults’ time to learn and practice the skills. Yet, we believe it must be frequent.

With the above plan, we crafted the *i-ACT For Life™* module and designed it to appeal to young adults. Then, we piloted it and found it was feasible, appropriate, and, most importantly, accepted by our young adults. We further tested it in a Randomized Controlled Trial, and we found positive results. *i-ACT For Life™* was able to reduce the psychological distress of our young adults. Not only that, but it also increases their self-compassion, psychological flexibility, and resilience!

We hope to continuously run the programme using digitalized technology and move towards more sustainable services. Meanwhile, we know we must not stop. This self-help book is published to materialize our *i-ACT For Life™*. So, while reaching our goals to digitalize it permanently, we hope the materials here will be helpful for people who find it beneficial in this format.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *i-ACT For Life™*, a modular prevention programme featuring integrated elements of Islamic Spirituality and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Young adults face many challenges in their lives, and these include educational, financial and social challenges. Facing these challenges are not easy, especially when they affect you in the following ways:

- Anxiety: feelings of intense worry, fear, and uncertainty
- Depression: feelings of hopelessness, loss of motivation, low moods
- Stress: overwhelming pressure to meet academic, financial, and professional demands.

What is *i-ACT for Life™*?

To help you cope with the challenges of young adulthood, this psycho-spiritual programme has been designed exclusively for you. Designed by experts in their fields, this programme features psychological and Islamic spiritual elements that aim to build psychological skills within you that will help you face stressors and challenges more effectively.

These skills will not solve all your problems, nor will they make your life instantly better. However, they can help by

giving you the ability to face your problems better by:

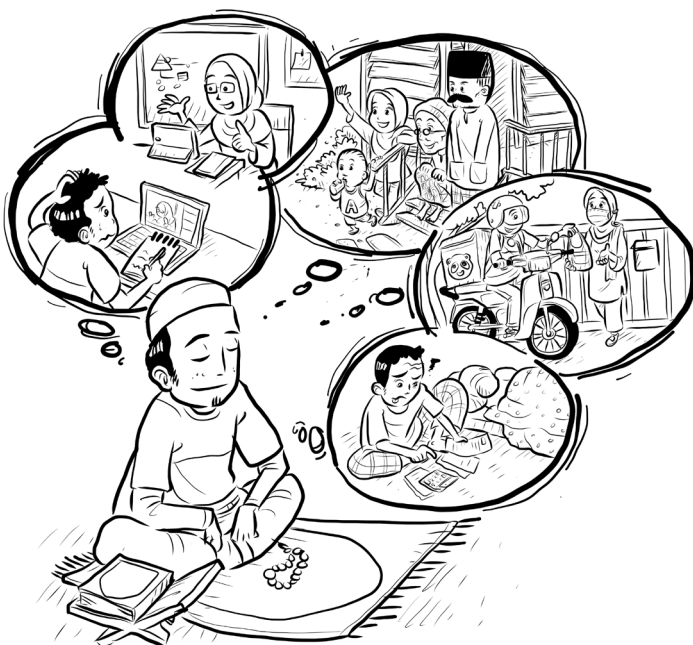
- Improving your psychological flexibility, so that you may be open to facing the future challenges in your life.
- Increasing your self-compassion, so that you may be kind to yourself as you face stressful times.
- Increasing your resilience, so that you may easily bounce back on your feet after facing future difficulty.

How to use this workbook

The workbook is separated into 5 modules, with each module corresponding to a week. To fully gain the benefits of this programme, it is recommended that you commit 10-15 minutes a day to complete the

daily exercises for each module. This will require you to commit 5 weeks of your time to complete the programme. If you desire to, you may repeat any exercises or modules if doing so would be helpful.

The daily exercises included in the weekly modules are specifically designed to help you build the needed psychological skills in order to thrive against future challenges you may face. Thus, we hope you can make time towards enhancing your psycho-spiritual health!



MAY YOU BE MORE
MENTALLY HEALTHY,
PSYCHOLOGICALLY
FLEXIBLE, BE MORE
COMPASSIONATE
TOWARDS YOURSELF,
 AND BECOME MORE
RESILIENT!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Jamilah Hanum Abdul Khaiyom, PhD

Dr. Jamilah Hanum currently serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and in ISTAC-IIUM. She also provides psychological services at the Psychology Services Unit in the department and the IIUM Mental Health and Psychosocial Care Team (IMPACT). The team was recognized as Honourable Mention - SDG 3 in the 2020 RCE Award for RCE Greater Gombak. In addition, she is a recipient of many research grants such as the Transdisciplinary Research Grant Scheme (TRGS), Translational Research (TR@M), Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS), Knowledge Transfer Programme (KTP), International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Communication (MCMC), and LESTARI SDG Research Grant. Furthermore, she has presented her work at many international conferences, and her work has been published in high refereed journals. She also has published six books, and the most recent ones are *Spiritual Therapy: An Islamic Perspective* and *Manual of Spiritual Therapy: Islamic Perspective*. Due to her active role as a researcher, she has been awarded a few awards nationally and internationally (e.g., Top Researchers of Joint Publications from 2019-2021 and Best Poster Award at the 7th Asian Cognitive Behavior Therapy Conference). In terms of consultancy, numerous organizations regularly invite her to conduct workshops in her area of specialization (i.e., Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Relaxation Training, Mindfulness-based Intervention). She is currently focusing much of her time researching integrating Islamic psychospiritual elements with conventional psychotherapy in promoting mental health and well-being. She also enjoys watching movies, coloring, swimming, decluttering, talking to plants, and playing with cats in her free time.



Amani Fadzlina Abdul Aziz

Amani Fadzlina graduated with a Bachelor's in Human Sciences (Psychology) from the International Islamic University Malaysia in 2021. Her main achievements include presenting at the 17th International Postgraduate Colloquium, developing and testing the effectiveness of *i-ACT for Life™* as part of her Final Year Project, and receiving recognition for her writing in numerous writing competitions. She enjoys reading, writing, embroidery, and playing chess in her free time.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Ahmad Nabil Md Rosli, MD

Dr. Ahmad Nabil is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Kulliyah of Medicine, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He received his Doctor of Psychiatry degree from University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in the year 2017. He has a special interest in religion, spirituality, and mental health. He obtained a formal accredited training in spiritual care from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Central California, US. His interest in writing and research is evident from his various scientific publications, locally and internationally.

He has been invited annually by the Persatuan Dokter Spesialis Kedokteran Jiwa Indonesia (PDSKJI) to deliver talks or workshops on spiritual care and mental health. His recent contribution is a chapter in a book recently published by Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM); *Waswas dan Kecelaruhan Obsesif Kompulsif Menurut Psikiatri Modern dan Ulama Silam* (2020) and another one published by Universiti Islam Malaysia (UIM); *Medical Wisdom and Ar-Ruqyah Ash-Shar'iyah* (2018).



Che Amnah Bahari, PhD

Dr Amnah Bahari is currently teaching at the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Science, IIUM. She graduated from Kulliyah of Economy and Management, IIUM and continued her post-graduate studies in Islamic studies focusing on the ḥadīth methodology at IIUM and ISTAC. Her interest areas are in ḥadīth studies and their methodology, Islamic Ethics, Islamic Thought, contemporary moral issues, and spirituality.

She has written books like *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth: An annotated Translation and Ketokohan Ibn Qutaybah Dalam Ilmu Kalam*. Sharing her thoughts with other authors, she has contributed to the writing of *Prophet Ya`qūb parenting style; IIUM Sejahtera Profiling; Spiritual Therapy: An Islamic Perspective and A Manual of Spiritual Therapy*. She also contributed to several article writings, and the recent is: "Work-life faith balance: the relevance in verse 77, Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ, in the context of Covid 19."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Nur Sakinah Thomas Binti Abdullah, PhD

Nur Sakinah Thomas has been teaching since 1994 in various institutions in Malaysia and Turkey. She has completed her PhD, Master and Bachelor of Education in Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her areas of expertise are teacher education as well as teaching and learning. She is currently specialising in Educational Psychology in Universiti Putra Malaysia as her main area of research interest is reducing and preventing teacher burnout. Currently she is working as a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Education and Languages, HELP University, Malaysia.

Experience i-ACT For Life or ACT For Life in Malay version through the SELANGKAH application.

Scan the QR code below.



Or get it on Google Play, App Store, or AppGallery.

We face many challenges in our lives, and these include educational, financial and social challenges. Facing these challenges are not easy, especially when they affect you in the following ways:

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- Improving your psychological flexibility, so that you may be open to facing the future challenges in your life.
- Increasing your self-compassion, so that you may be kind to yourself as you face stressful times.
- Increasing your resilience, so that you may easily bounce back on your feet after facing future difficulty.

Go through the experience with *i-ACT For Life* to help you be better prepared to face challenges in the future.

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